

Frequently Asked Questions – On Site Sewage Facility (OSSF)

What are the proper steps to obtaining a permit to construct an OSSF?

The property owner must complete an OSSF permit application, submit all required documents requested from the checklist, and pay the proper permitting fee.

How long does the permitting authority have to review my OSSF permit application?

Guadalupe County Environmental Health Designated Representative must either approve or deny the planning materials you submitted with your OSSF permit application within 30 days after the receipt. *TCEQ 285.3(c)*

What laws and rules govern OSSF?

Chapter 366 – Law that governs the OSSF permitting program

Title 30, Texas Administrative Code Chapter 285 –OSSF regulations

Title 30, Texas Administrative Code Chapter 30, Subchapter A and G

Texas Water Code Section 7.173 – Violation relating to sewage disposal

Guadalupe County On-Site Sewage Facilities Order

Effective 1966, Amended 1967, Amended 1979,
Amended 1988, Amended 2005, Amended 2008,
Amended 2009

How do I check to see if my OSSF has a permit?

Guadalupe County Environmental Health will be able to search by the property's address and/or legal description for any permits on file.

Is there a minimum lot size to install an OSSF?

Guadalupe County On-Site Sewage Facilities Order requires 1 acre as a minimum. Smaller lots that do not meet the 1 acre minimum, and were subdivided before October 1, 1997, may apply for an OSSF, but the OSSF must comply with the requirements set forth in Chapter 285 and Guadalupe County On-Site Sewage Facilities Order. *TCEQ 285.4(b)*

I am buying property that has an existing OSSF. What do I need to do to connect to the OSSF?

Guadalupe County Environmental Health will require a permit to connect into an existing OSSF. .

Am I allowed to connect to an existing OSSF that is being used for other buildings?

No. To connect a new building to an existing OSSF that is being used by another building could be permitted if the existing OSSF was originally designed for both buildings. If so, a permit will be required to connect into an existing OSSF. If not, a new OSSF must be permitted for the new building. *TCEQ 285.2(2)*

Am I allowed to install or repair my own OSSF?

Yes. The property owner of a single-family dwelling is not required to be a licensed installer in order to install or repair an on-site sewage facility (OSSF) on the individual's property. The property owner shall meet all permitting, construction, and maintenance requirements. The site evaluation must be performed by an individual who possesses either a current site evaluator or a professional engineer license. *30 TAC 30.244*

My OSSF is failing. What do I need to do?

Commonly used for OSSF failure checks. Check the water usage records and compare the average gallons used per day with the amount specified on the system design.

- Misidentification of soil or site conditions – Subsurface water flow within the disposal field, subsurface restrictive horizons below the disposal field, or seasonally saturated soils.
- Organic overloading – A large amount of food, grease, or the like leaving the facility and entering the septic tank, the disposal field is most likely overloaded.

- Age – if the OSSF is more than 15 years old, the OSSF may need to be replaced.
- Poor maintenance – An OSSF system using secondary treatment or drip irrigation must be inspected every four months to ensure the system is working as designed. A septic tank should be pumped depending on the size of the system and the number of people using the system.

Figures with a **green background** represent average situations

	Household Size (number of people)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+
Tank Size (gallons)	Duration (in years) Between Pumping's and Inspections								
750	9.1	4.2	2.6	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.4
1,000	12.4	5.9	3.7	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.8
1,250	15.6	7.5	4.8	3.4	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.2
1,500	18.9	9.1	5.9	4.2	3.3	2.6	2.1	1.8	1.5
1,750	22.1	10.7	6.9	5.0	3.9	3.1	2.6	2.2	1.9
2,000	25.4	12.4	8.1	5.9	4.5	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.2
2,250	28.6	14.0	9.1	6.7	5.2	4.2	3.5	3.0	2.6
2,500	31.9	15.6	10.2	7.5	5.9	4.8	4.0	3.5	3.0

How can I make sure that my OSSF works properly?

Most Important: Keep in mind that an OSSF is not a city sewer. If an OSSF is treated correctly and fed properly, it will provide efficient service. While operating these “**dos** and **don'ts**”

DO:

- Have the tank pumped and cleaned by a TCEQ registered sludge transporter. Use the table above to determine how often that tank need to be pumped and cleaned.
- Check the toilet for leaks periodically. Use a water-based dye to the flush tank and see if the dye appears in the toilet within 10 minutes (without flushing the toilet).

DON'T:

- Build over any part of an OSSF. Examples of items not to construct over the system are driveways, barns, storage buildings, sidewalks, and patios.
- Add chemical additives or the so-called enzymes into the OSSF. Some of these additives may even be harmful to the toilet's operation.
- Use the toilet to dispose of cleaning tissues, cigarette butts, or other trash. This disposal will burden the treatment system with an undesirable load of solids.
- Drive or park vehicles over the OSSF.